

Interesting Chat and Stage Gossip for Playgoers

Classic Rome On the Screen In 'Nero' Film

Forthcoming Production to Show the Burning of the Imperial City

From The Tribune's European Bureau
ROME, Oct. 30.—While cinematograph trusts and producers in Rome are complaining about the American invasion (as they call the recent arrival of American film companies in Rome) the unemployed are blessing their arrival, as it means that now there is plenty of work to do.

One of these companies, sent by the Fox Film Company to produce "Nero," based on the story of "Quo Vadis," has been busy for several months and, in this production, thousands of Italian cinema actors have been employed. Many of the scenes have been set at the Nova Film Studios, outside the Porta del Popolo, but the main scenes of the games and fights in the Circus have been staged at the Stadio, near Ponte Milvio. This was rented from the municipality of Rome after every possible effort had failed to induce the authorities to loan the company the Colosseum. Here in this Stadio they produced the "Gladiators' Fight" as well as the "Lions' Bout with the Christians." These scenes were true to life. Manikins, with clockwork insides, were thrown into the auditorium, where the lions pulled them viciously to pieces.

The salaries paid seemed far more generous than those of Italian firms, but, as Italian producers point out, the Americans can afford to do this, as their dollar is worth twenty francs. When they paid ten francs to any one who would don a toga and walk into the Amphitheater, they were only really paying 50 cents for four hours' work. During the two months at the Stadio the number of men and women employed a day was between three and four thousand, while on some exceptionally busy days this number was greatly exceeded.

"Quo Vadis?" the story of Nero's time, is probably the most interesting play ever produced on the films, and it requires an enormous cast, as there are scenes in the Roman Forum, the Circus and a representation of the burning of Rome. When dramatized some years ago for the stage it required a huge cast and wonderful scenery and took four hours for performance.

In a play of this kind accuracy in scenery and setting and costumes is required. The company was brought over to Rome in order that the scenes in the Circus and Forum should be accurate. Italian carpenters and stage setters, when they specialize in ancient architecture, are wonderfully clever. Although the lumber for the building of a model section of classic Rome, recently completed at the Nova Studios, was brought over from America for economic reasons, the carpenters, architects and painters all are Romans and experts in their line. All these buildings will be burned during the filming of the burning of Rome. No doubt the flames will illuminate the sky as on the day of the real conflagration. A special permit was required from the municipality in order that this act could be produced, and a special guard of firemen will be on duty to prevent any sparks reaching the nearby village of Ponte Milvio. As the authorities considered it advisable that this scene should be produced when the country was less dry and sparks would then be less dangerous, the recent months have been used to train the crowd of actors in the scenes of terror during the flight of the Roman people from the burning town. Italians are wonderfully good at depicting emotion of any kind, and the job of the director of Fox is not a difficult one.

The scenes along the Apian Way will be taken subsequently, as well as those just outside the San Sebastian Gate, when St. Peter reluctantly left Rome. The scene of the vision, when he was stopped by a youth whom he recognized as Christ, will not be taken just on the legendary spot, as the church is there, but near by at the small and ancient temple where other versions say Peter spoke the words, "Quo vadis, Domini?" ("Where goest Thou, Lord?") and to which the figure answered, "As thou art deserting my people I go to Rome to be crucified a second time."

What greatly appealed to the Italian cinematograph actors engaged here for this production is the stipulation that all those actors who remain until the entire film is finished will receive at the end of their contract a double envelope, or in other words, an extra month's pay. By means of this generous arrangement the cast of "Nero" is hard at work, while Italian film producers are complaining that the men and women do not want to work.

The feeling against foreign films and companies has become very bitter and the fear of a vendetta against their stage property while the Stadio was being used led the Fox management to place guards day and night around the amphitheater, so that no one could enter, unless on duty. The authorities supplied mounted policemen so that the stage property has not been damaged by any one.

"Woman He Married" Filmed
The cast has been completed for Anita Stewart's next picture, "The Woman He Married." The list includes Shannon Day, Darrell Foss, Donald MacDonald, Charlotte Pierce, Frank Tokanaga, Charles Belcher and Willis Roberts. Fred Niblo will direct. The picture is adapted from Herbert Bashford's stage play of the same name.



Julia Marlowe in "The Merchant of Venice" JAS. O. SCHWARTZ

Stage Gossip

(Continued from page one)

he seemed to do so with a gesture of finality. Everything Cohan does has his original touch, and the touch on this occasion apparently was labeled "finis." But across the deeps of the Atlantic comes a faint volume of trumpet prologue to renewed activities. George is restless, and it is said that he is planning to return with a flourish. The nature of his productions to be is more or less of a mystery, but he will undoubtedly look over the foreign field and perchance show the play he wrote on the trip across. In anticipation of Mr. Cohan's return to Broadway activities some 600 applications are said to have been received from actors and actresses who seek to enter his employ. At present "The O'Brien Girl" at the Liberty is his only representation in the American theater, but a recent cable received from him says that he is encouraged by the attitude which members of the theatrical profession have taken recently and that he may organize nearly a score of companies next season. So George may step lightly back to Broadway as if he had never been away.

Capacity houses have greeted the production of "The Beggar's Opera" in Los Angeles, and it has been necessary to cancel the smaller cities of California in order to play another week in Los Angeles. The production is scheduled to play thirteen weeks along the Pacific Coast and through Western Canada. Following this routing it will be seen in week, half-week and one-night stands in many cities, with a run in Chicago and then New York before leaving for England. The offering in New York is especially interesting in view of the fact that it was scarcely profitable last season.

Two weeks have been added to the Shakespearean season which E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe are now giving at the Century Theater. Their tenancy will end on Saturday evening, December 10. Their visit to Philadelphia, where they are to appear next week, has accordingly been deferred. The plays for the week of November 28 are: Monday night and Saturday matinee, "Twelfth Night"; Tuesday and Saturday nights, "Hamlet"; Wednesday and Friday nights, "The Taming of the Shrew"; Tuesday and Friday, "The Merchant of Venice." The program for the week of December 5 is: Monday and Wednesday nights, "The Taming of the Shrew"; Tuesday and Friday, "The Merchant of Venice"; Thursday night and Saturday matinee, "Hamlet." The season closes with a performance of "Twelfth Night."

Mme. Alberti, director of the Young People's Theater Company, has arranged a program of plays and pantomimes to be presented at the Cort Theater on Friday afternoon, November 25, at 3:30, and Saturday morning, November 26, at 10:30 o'clock. A pantomime by Mme. Alberti, entitled "The Doll's Adventures," in which Miriam Battista will be the doll, and two plays by Sheldon Davis, "The Chimney Prince" and "The Golden Hill," are on the program. The latter tells the story of a man who remembered and a boy who dreamed it. It was written especially for Glenn Hunter, who is now appearing with Billie Burke in "The Intimate Strangers," and he will play the father, while the boy will be played by Junior Tiersan.

In conjunction with the Keith "Third of a Century" celebration E. F. Albee will publish this year a complete history of vaudeville, tracing its evolution from the primitive efforts of museum, music hall and "variety" into the present-day idea. Mr. Albee's book will be the result of years of research, and writings and chapters will be devoted to the record made by the theaters in war service and in patriotic, charitable and civic utility, during the war.

Lillian Tashman, who was a member of the cast of "The Gold Diggers" during its long run at the Lyceum, will assume the rôle of Amy in "Lilies of the Field" to-morrow night at the Klaw Theater.



William Gillette in "The Dream Maker" SARONY

Great Actresses Who Hold Hamlet Was a Woman

The presentation of "Hamlet" in multiple reels at the Lexington Theater with Asta Nielsen, the Danish actress, in the title rôle, may be so far as the films are concerned a novelty, but Mme. Nielsen in playing the Dane is supported by precedents established by such great actresses as Bernhardt, Charlotte Cushman and Rachel.

Every great tragedienne has at one time or another signified her desire to play the rôle of the Prince of Denmark, which is regarded among the people of the theater as the greatest rôle ever written. Our own Fanny Davenport, who gave the English-speaking stage a cycle of Sardou hearings with "La Tosca," "Gismonda" and "Fedora," at the time of her death had gone so far in preparing to give her interpretation of Hamlet as to make a production and book a tour.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the American stage alone saw almost contemporaneously three great actresses as Hamlet. At the same time the elder Kean, fresh from his triumph in England, came to America to show us what was then regarded as the greatest Hamlet. His performance was compelled to stand comparison with that of Charlotte Cushman.

Not a few students of Shakespeare of recognized authority have from time to time contributed to our literature studious and comprehensive discourses on the subject of Hamlet having been a woman. Among these is the American Shakespearean scholar, the late Dr. Edward P. Vining, who in "The Mystery of Hamlet" sets up the contention that Hamlet was a woman; and Dr. Vining bases his case largely upon Shakespeare's own lines.

A statement made by a critic of Charlotte Cushman's performance of Hamlet, to the effect that the actress, great as she was, could not entirely separate her sex from an interpretation of a masculine rôle, drew from Miss Cushman the reply: "Why should I not play Hamlet? Who is better fitted to enact a part thoroughly feminine, and who no doubt was a woman, if we are to take Shakespeare's words that he puts into Hamlet's mouth in the scene between the Prince and Horatio? Hamlet is not interested in what Horatio says, because Hamlet is a woman, not a man."

Sarah Bernhardt, on being brought to task for essaying Hamlet, replied: "I cannot see Hamlet as a man. The things he says, his impulses, his actions, entirely indicate to me that he was a woman, and it is so recorded that the story from which Shakespeare drew his inspiration made this character a woman."



Anne Meredith in "The Blue-Beard's Eighth Wife" CAMPBELL STUDIOS

Shadows on the Screen

Those who have been objecting to the so-called "sex play" on the screen will be pleased to learn that Glenn Hunter is to be starred in a series of pictures with the American boy as the theme. "Apron Strings" is the first of these productions now being filmed at the Glendale Studios. Frank Tuttle wrote the story, and in the cast are Marguerite Courtot, Beatrice Morgan and William Tooker.

Asta Nielsen, who is the "Hamlet" in the photoplay of that name at the Lexington Theater, has just completed a film version of Strindberg's play "Countess Julia," which will be shown in New York soon.

James Rennie and Mona Kingsley have been engaged to play in Basil King's "The Dust Flower," which Rowland Lee will make for Goldwyn. Mr. Rennie will arrive in Culver City this week.

"Superstition," a photoplay which was made abroad at a cost of \$500,000, will be shown here by A. E. Lefcourt, president of the Pioneer Film Company. The production as it stands is in fourteen reels.

Fannie Hurst's story, "Just Around the Corner," is promised for early release by Paramount. Frances Marion wrote the scenario and directed the picture. In the cast are Margaret Siddons, Lewis Sargent and Sigrid Holmquist.

"Second-Hand Rose" has been taken by Universal and made into a screen story for Gladys Walton. William Younger is making the adaptation.

Charles Ray will arrive in New York next Wednesday on the Michigan Central's Wolverine and will remain here for two weeks.

Agnes Ayres and Jack Holt will co-star in William De Mille's next production, for which he is now preparing the script. Paramount loves to combine its stars, so as soon as Miss Ayres

finishes "The Lane That Has No Turning" and Mr. Holt finishes "White Satan Sleeps" they will go to work on the new picture.

Porter Emerson Browne, author of "The Bad Man," has named his first photoplay "All at Sea." This was written for Dick Barthelmess and will be his second starring vehicle in Inspiration Pictures.

George Kibbe Turner's "White Shoulders" will be produced on the screen by Katherine MacDonald.

Leon Perret, the French director, is picturizing "L'Ecuysse," by Paul Bourget. The production is being made in England and France, and will be brought to this country next month. Gladys Jennings plays the title rôle.

Reginald Denny, who will star in "The Leather Pushers," will have André Peyre, the French aviator and screen star, to play opposite him.

Fay Marbe is to have a party at Reisenweber's to-morrow night following the opening of Loew's new theater in Brooklyn. Among those who have promised to "do something" are Hope Hampton, June Caprice, Diana Allen, Lillian Walker, Dorothy Green, Eugene O'Brien, Wyndham Standing, Alma Rubens and Norman Trevor.

Four of Charles Ray's pictures are being prepared for the screen at the same time. Ray is busy finishing "Smudge," and is also superintending the assembling of his other pictures. They are "Gas, Oil and Water," "The Barnstormer" and "The Deuce of Spades."

Camera work was begun on a new B. Hampton picture, "Wildfire," by Zene Grey, Claire Adams and Carl Gantvoort head the cast.

Huntley Gordon is playing the leading rôle in the William Christy Cabanne picture tentatively called "Women of Conquest."

Film Grand Opera Foreshadowed in Puccini's 'La Tosca'

Hugo Riesenfeld frankly confesses that his half-hour version of "La Tosca," with Pauline Frederick appearing in the title rôle and Puccini's music set into the scenes, which he is presenting this week at the Rialto Theater, is an experiment. Heretofore it has been his custom to prepare a music setting for the pictures shown at his houses, but this "La Tosca" is a musician's creation, a re-editing of a six-reel film production to fit the Puccini orchestral score. It is the first production in which both music and film play were drawn upon simultaneously to create harmony between the two mediums.

"This may lead to the successful realization of the musicians' dream of screen grand opera," said Mr. Riesenfeld, "or it may be merely an incident in the development of the motion picture program. This small beginning, simple and unpretentious, is made possible by the kindness of Adolph Zukor, whose film composition produced 'La Tosca' with Pauline Frederick in the title rôle. It was a picture of unusual quality. The Rialto has been permitted to cut down this production from one hour's length to about twenty-five minutes, in order to utilize only the essentials of Sardou's drama and Puccini's music."

Cutting down a six-reel film production to two reels is a rarity in motion picture presentation—film productions usually are held inviolate and presented by the exhibitor in almost the exact form in which they leave the producer's studios. It will be seen from this that Mr. Zukor's donation of the six-reel production, with carte blanche to Mr. Riesenfeld to edit it to serve his experimentation, is not alone a compliment to Mr. Riesenfeld, but a gift to music. The little "screen opera," as it may be called, has aroused great interest in both music and film circles, and its presentation at the Rialto will serve as a test of the possibilities of similar future creations.

Coming, "The Two Orphans"

When D. W. Griffith selected "The Two Orphans" for picture production he selected the best known title in the country with the exception of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Since 1880 more than 100,000 performances of the play were given in this country. Kate Claxton played the rôle more than 7,000 times. The work on the Griffith production is almost completed.

George Ade With Famous

The latest famous author to join the ranks of writers who are with Paramount is George Ade, author of "Fables in Slang." The Hoosier author arrived in Hollywood last week and is working on "Our Leading Citizen," his first original story for Paramount. Tommy Meighan will star in this picture.

New Plays

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established a top price of \$2.50 to prevail during the engagement. The book and lyrics are by Roy Dixon, the music by Arthur Gutman, and the production has been staged by Larry Ceballos. Marie Astrová, who sings the title rôle, was the prima donna in European productions of "Sara" and "The Merry Widow."

E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe will make their appearance to-morrow night at the Century Theater in "The Merchant of Venice." Mr. Sothern and Miss Marlowe last acted the rôles of Shylock and Portia in New York City seven years ago, which is a long time in the life of the theater-going public, so that this presentation will be almost in the nature of a first appearance for many in their audiences. Unitt and Wickes have prepared the new scenes for this old play. The Saturday matinee will be the only one given during the week.

On Saturday evening John Cort's production of Manuel Penella's "The Wild Cat" will be presented at the Park Theater. Senor Penella will direct the opening performance of this spectacular operetta, which had a record run of 2,700 nights in Spain. The three acts and five scenes are all laid in Andalusia, and from that fact, and from the title, it is to be inferred that there will be plenty of action. There will be an augmented orchestra and a large chorus.

By one of those sudden, last-minute changes of heart that not infrequently beset the producers of new shows, the opening of "Grace George, in 'Marie Antoinette,'" which was to have been made last evening at the Playhouse, was postponed to Tuesday of this week. The management announces that the holders of tickets for Monday night's performance will have them honored Wednesday evening. Tickets for the opening last night, will, of course, be good for the Tuesday premiere.

The Theater Guild has added another play to its new bill, which will be seen at the Garrick Theater a week from to-morrow night. "Bouabouche," a farce in two acts by Georges Courteline, will be given, besides "The Wife with a Smile," by Denys Amiel and Abbie Obey. Arnold Daly and Blanche Yurka have the leading rôles in the latter play.

In the Good Old Days

Ten years ago Al Christie says he used to make a comedy on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, providing he could get the studio for the week end. If he could get Dorothy Davenport, Harold Lockwood and Eugene Forde in time he would make a complete reel. Now Christie has just finished "A Barnyard Cavalier," a modern comedy, taking five weeks to make and using more than three hundred people. Bobby Vernon and Viola Daniel are the featured players. It is done in two reels.

Miss Griffith a Dancer

Although it is not generally known, Corinne Griffith is a classical and ballet dancer, and in her two pictures, soon to be released, she does not use a double. In "The Single Track" she does an Oriental dance and in "Received Payment" she appears as a toe dancer. Miss Griffith has received a number of stage offers, but she will remain in pictures.

Mayme Kelso in "Penrod"

Marshall Neilan has engaged Mayme Kelso to portray the part in "Penrod" in which Mrs. Katherine Griffith appeared just before she died. Only another hour was needed to complete the picture, but her death made it necessary to retake all of the scenes in which she appeared with Miss Kelso in the part.

Transforming Of a Villain In the Theater

Lowell Sherman Welcomes Change to a Heroic Role in Eugene Walter Play

Here's a test for you amateur psychologists to try on Mr. and Mrs. Average Playgoer. Draw them into conversation over the tea cups, casually mention the name of Lowell Sherman and then note the reaction. A smile of recognition lights up their faces. The lean, dark-eyed actor is a familiar figure to them because of exposure on the screen and behind the footlights of Broadway stages. They turn over thoughts in their minds, they seek to reconstruct stage pictures and episodes concerned with Lowell Sherman.

"Lowell Sherman," one can imagine them finally saying in unison, "isn't he the modern stage villain? Didn't he play a villain in 'The Sign of the Cross'?"

Because one producer has chosen to cast him for the rôle of a villain in several plays, Lowell Sherman has become, for the casual theatergoer, a villain of the stage, just as other actors have become closely identified with things romantic in the theater. Now, as the three tensely gripping acts of "The Man's Name" unfold at the Republic Theater to a dramatic conclusion, Sherman is revealed in a rôle distinctly opposite from those in which he has been called upon to play a man possessed of no scruples or morals whatsoever, one who received the hisses of the galleries. The same producer, A. H. Woods, who cast him for villain parts, has given him the opportunity to do exactly the reverse.

Evidently Sherman welcomes the change. He gives one of the finest performances of his career in the past written by Eugene Walter and Marjorie Chase. The skillfully written dialogue is uttered now as casual but insinuating conversation, now in staccato tones of fury. The tempo throughout the three acts seems perfectly adjusted. His gestures, his changes of expression, his expert listening are all as good as his vocal moments.

In his small offstage dressing room, a few nights ago, Lowell Sherman sat reminiscing as he removed the grease colors incident to his portrayal of character, Eugene Walter, ensconced as a trunk, with cap pulled down well on his forehead, twitted the actor good-naturedly as he occasionally ventured opinions.

"You know, Gene can do these things," said Sherman laughingly, in explanation. "This play makes the third he has written that I have appeared in. I sort of know him, you see."

Mr. Sherman doesn't believe in characterizing parts as "villains," "heroes" or with any similar appellations.

"Of course, I am glad of the opportunity to represent on the stage one who is not all that is mean and despicable. I should like very much to continue in such parts if possible. But really, a part is good or bad, considered from the standpoint of acting opportunities it gives. A man may portray a villain on the stage and yet have a part wonderful in acting opportunities, and the rôle of a man who has a finely adjusted sense of justice and morality may be a very poor one. The way to judge parts is on the chances they give one to act."

The authors of "The Man's Name," which title becomes of deep significance at the close of the second act, raise a question in the play which is open to much debate. There are only four characters in the play. One is a young author who, nearly dead from tuberculosis, has regained his health in the Rockies with material aid from his wife. The latter became acquainted with the man she married when he came, half alive, to the publishing house where she was employed as chief assistant to the head of the organization. She recognizes his genius, marries him and then arranges to take him West in an effort to save his life. For the necessary funds for the journey she deceives her husband. He is told that the money is borrowed from an aunt.

After the author has recovered his health, through a series of incidents, together with his own seemingly innocent but skillful questioning, he learns of his wife's act of sacrifice and forces a confession from her. She defends herself by telling him that she had acted as she had because of her love for him and because she had desired to save his life.

"If I'd had a million years to think it over I would have done the same thing," she tells him.

Was the wife forgivable? "I think, for the reasons she gives, that she was entitled to forgiveness," Lowell Sherman said. "Her husband was dying, she loved him, she recognized his genius, she wanted to save his life. Without money he would die. She had no one to turn to but this man of wealth. She sacrificed herself to him to save her husband."

Selznick Workers Are in Their New Quarters

The Selznick Film Company has taken up its new quarters in the Norma Talmadge Studio, in East Forty-eighth Street. Mr. Selznick negotiated a long-term lease with Joseph Schenck, the studio being available because of the fact that Norma and Constance are going to work on the Coast for awhile. Elaine Hammerstein is already working in the new studio in "Why Announce Your Marriage?" and Owen Moore is also working there.